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Atari Online News, Etc.
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->From the Editor's Keyboard
"~~~~~"

"Saying it like it is!"

Well, the weather has cooled down a little bit, but that suits me just fine these days. I don't need to see high temperatures and the humidity that usually accompanies it. It also makes working outside a lot more enjoyable! And, it was also nice to play a round of golf without having to towel off every few minutes!

Most of my outdoor projects are nearing completion. We decided to paint the house trim to match the new paint color scheme on the shed. What an experience it is to tape up windows and vinyl siding (I can be a sloppy painter!). Some of our windows are quite old, so the molding needs a lot of extra care. I'm almost done with them, however. Then I'll finish up the deck and the back stairs. Then, it looks like a little clean-up (washing down some of the siding) and the majority of outside stuff will be complete. Then on to the inside projects!!

It's hard to believe that the summer is almost over - only a month officially, but only a week if you follow Labor Day as the unofficial end of the season. I have to admit that it's been an overall great summer - one I've really enjoyed. True, that enjoyment is probably due to my "retirement". It's been a summer in which I've been extremely busy, but it's been a controlled busyness. No stress, no unrealistic deadlines, and no critics other than my wife and me. As to how long I'll continue this path is still unclear, but I'll likely start to really think about my future in the next month or so. It should be an interesting period of time!

I know that these next comments are really out there (and literally so), but I have to mention it. All of the sudden, Pluto is not a planet?? Why, because a bunch of scientific yahoos decided to come up with new criteria, and Pluto didn't make the cut? Sorry, but we traditionalists aren't buying into this decision! What's next? I suppose some technology yahoo will make a determination that the Atari systems aren't real computers because none of them operated at speeds over 100 Mhz. Sorry for the distraction!

Until next time...

=~==~==

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. I apologize for my absence last week, but I had a minor family emergency last week. Luckily, it wasn't a major problem, but it did, nonetheless, keep me from completing the column last week.

Suffice it to say that the wonders of modern day medicine, while not without their price, are a wonderful thing. My father went for a cardiac stress test and was sent for an angiogram followed immediately by an angioplasty. He's doing fine now, and dog-sitting for my sister's papillon... I agree... they're almost too small to be classified as dogs, but what the heck. <G>

It's been one of those annoying weeks all around, too. The hard drive in my laptop (my main computer) decided to give up the ghost the other day, and the replacement just arrived today. I've got everything backed up, but it's the swapping the drives and formatting and partitioning and re-installing of apps and configuration of all the miscellaneous stuff that I don't have time for at the moment.

So I'm sitting here using a borrowed laptop with WinDOZE. Now, those of you who read this column regularly know that I usually use Linux. I guess that if you've never used Linux, Windows might make you happy. But Linux is what I'm comfortable with for the moment, and I've always said that computers should be about making things easier.

So here I sit, wishing that hard drives would last longer and that all operating systems would automatically conform to what you want. Well, someday, maybe. <G>

Well folks, let's get on with the reason for this column... the news, hints, tips and info available from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
=====

'Ryan' posts this about his memory expansion unit:

"So the one interesting feature of my non-working Atari STf is this memory expansion thing that's installed. I figured you'd like to hear about it, or maybe can even tell me more about it.

The logic board of this Atari looks like this, though mine is labeled "Rev. D" not "Rev. C":

http://oldmachines.tripod.com/ActPics/atari_1040open.jpg

The square chip in the lower right of the logic board has been removed and a circuit board stuck in its place, and the chip placed back in a socket on the board. The chip is labeled "C025912-38 / JH23-019 / 7A1 03". There are also 8 places where additional chips can be installed on the board; every other one is filled with a chip marked "TOSHIBA 9319TCK / TC514400AZ-60 GER" which seem to be 60-ns RAM chips, though I don't know what capacity. Though since only half of the spots are filled, I'm guessing this is a 2-MB expansion card. From the board there snakes a 20-pin ribbon cable into the left side of the metal box in the center of

the logic board where a similar chip hijacking is taking place, this time with a rectangular one marked "C025914-38A / PH23-024 / 6M1 37".

The only identifiable markings on the board are "Gigatron OHG" which seems to be the name of a company that made 2- and 4-MB memory expansion products for the ST back in the day, though my Google search isn't turning up a whole heck of a lot -- just a German article about the existence of the product:

http://www.stcarchiv.de/stc1990/12_ramerw.php

For anyone interested in what the article says, it begins with a lot of palaver over why one would want more RAM, describes Atari's official expansion strategy of soldering more memory chips on top of the existing ones, and then dives into the 3rd-party products which achieve RAM expansion in more sane ways. They mention the RAM piggy-back board strategy, which works a lot like soldering the extra RAM chips directly over the old ones but is a bit cleaner. And they talk about the MMU piggy-back strategy, which seems to be what this Gigatron product does. (So I guess this "C025912-38" chip is the MMU.) The article goes on to mention MMU piggy-back upgrades from two other companies.

I was surprised to hear about an MMU -- based on my experience with 8-MHz 68000-based Macintosh computers I hadn't expected the Atari ST to have one, since the Macs don't.

This Atari doesn't turn on anymore (red light on keyboard, that's about all) so it's hard to figure much out about this expansion card. Months ago, when it did at least turn on and sometimes boot into TOS, I got Notator started a couple times and the free memory was much more than usual on my functioning 1MB ST. I also once got a newer version of TOS booted from floppy which did a RAM test and I want to say it listed 2.5MB but I don't remember for sure.

I had wanted to remove the expansion to see if it's the cause of this Atari's problems, but I can't even physically remove the MMU from its socket in the Gigatron board. I don't want to try too hard for fear of damaging it. And anyway my working ST doesn't have any square chips or sockets like the one into which the expansion plugs, so I couldn't test it there either.

So, that's all there is for now.

Now that I'm selling it on eBay I got around to taking a photo of the RAM expansion, in case anyone is curious:

<http://www.ryandesign.com/tmp/atari-stf-gigatron.jpg>

Mark Bedingfield tells Ryan:

"Pretty much spot on, the majority of ram upgrades (Marpet, Evesham etc) piggy back the video shifter and MMU.

IIRC the 68000 doesn't have a built in MMU. It wasn't until the 68030 came about that Motorola integrated one. It is why you cannot run virtual memory on an Atari without a 68030 or better.

If 8 slots are full and 8 empty it will be 2 meg. Try reseating all the socketed chips. It is amazing what a little oxidization will do."

'Phantommm'asks for Atari info:

"[I'm] Looking for info on all ways possible to connect Atari Computers, such as MegaSTE and Falcon to the Internet without using a normal Dial-up account/modem.

Is there any Web Sites with info?

Seems I recall some hardware that allowed this.

Anything new in the works?

What I really need is a way to use a Cable Modem with my Ataris.
What do I need to do this? (Hardware and Software)
Without using Mint if possible."

David Wade tells Phantommm:

"<http://hardware.atari.org/disco/ether/enec.htm>
<http://www.dwade.freeseerve.co.uk/atari/main.html>
<http://home.arcor.de/thomas.redelberger/prj/atari/etherne/index.htm>
<http://www.cyberus.ca/~anodyne/ethernet/main.htm> "

Lyndon Amsdon adds:

"Not forgetting:

<http://hardware.atari.org/netusbee/netus.htm> "

David Wade replies:

"Sorry, cut and paste overload. That was meant to go in the "Anything new in the works?" section.

How is it going, it looks good, when can I order some for my STE, TT and old old Mega 2....

p.s. any one going to do USB storage driver. would be nice if we could plug USB lap top drive in that USB port...."

Rob Mahlert jumps in and posts:

"Yes, CAB is SLOW! But have you tried HighWire?
<http://highwire.atari-users.net>"

Ronald Hall adds:

"There is the Lantronix UDS10 serial port to LAN converter. It will allow you to do telnet and ftp easily on any Atari.

There is the EtherNEC. Its basically a NIC (network card) that attaches to the cartridge port of your ST, TT or Falcon. It works with STing, and there are MINT drivers as well. With it, you can browse the web, do

e-mail, newsgroups, pretty well whatever.

In the works, is the EtherNAT. True LAN connectivity for Falcon owners with a CTxx series accelerator... USB port as well."

'Kryten' asks an interesting question about some of the frequencies used in the ST:

"I notice my STE has 32.084988 for the main logic and CPU
8.010613 for the FDC

I am curious as to why Atari chose these seemingly arbitrary and unrelated frequencies for the CPU and FDC clocks."

'Chris' tells Kryten:

"32 was for the video circuit, STE is a bit different though on a STFM you will find the 32 is plugged into the shifter for the video. It then goes to 16MHz for the input of the MMU, which then chunks out 8MHz for the CPU and 4MHz for the sound system. I think there was a 2MHz also for the modem port I think."

Kryten counters:

"What I meant was why did they use 32.084988 and 8.010613 rather than 32 and 8 MHz exactly. The latter are easy values to find and buy.

0.084988 is 1/11.766367... or roughly 3/35.2991...

I can't see a relation between any of the crystal frequencies and PAL and NTSC colour carriers, which one might do to reduce colour dot crawl for instance.

It isn't needed to correct PAL frame timing, as this uses multiples of 64 us.

NTSC is slightly slower than 60 Hz field rate, so one would expect a crystal slower than 32 MHz."

Chris adds:

"Don't forget the shifter is a CPU in its own right, it has to crunch millions of bits of information 60 times a second to output the video. You might want to check out the diagrams for the ST to get a idea on what's going on exactly."

Kryten explains:

"I'm a professional electronic engineer implementing the Atari STE logic (as much as possible) in a single FPGA. I can easily get a 32 MHz crystal and divide it down for 8 MHz etc.

I have the ST circuit diagrams and can understand them well.

What I don't understand is why Atari chose crystal frequencies that are

slightly off integer multiples of 1 MHz.

If I have to run several different clock domains this makes implementation harder."

Michael Schwingen tells Kryten:

"This should work as long as you don't need PAL or NTSC TV output. If you look at the schematics (I remember the ST/MST version), you can see that at least in the PAL version, the 32.xxxMHz clock oscillator is part of a discrete PLL that is sync'd to the 4.433MHz PAL burst - IIRC, the HSYNC signal (which is scaled down from the 32.xxxMHz main clock) is phase-locked to the 4.433MHz clock. AFAIR, this is required to produce PAL-compliant FBAS signals. I am not sure about NTSC, though."

Kryten replies:

"I suspected something like that, I just could not work out the ratio.
 $32.084988 / 4.43361775 = 7.236751071$

That [NTSC] has a 32.215905 MHz crystal.
Which is nearly $14.31818.. \text{ MHz} * 9/4$
Using precise values, 4 times NTSC times $9/4$ is 32.21590909... MHz
So it seems that Atari used the rounded off value of 14.31818 MHz.
Bad boys!

Oh well, I think I shall use NTSC based values for both PAL and NTSC versions.
Most modern TVs that use PAL also have SCART (PERITEL) sockets for analogue RGB input, while NTSC TVs do not. I see the circuit just uses a 32.21590909... MHz oscillator block for the Peritel-output version.

The Amiga sensibly used a single 14.31818.. MHz crystal and halved it for the CPU clock."

Well folks, that's it for this week. It's getting late, and this foreign keyboard is getting on my nerves. No, it's not French or Dutch or anything like that... When I said foreign I meant that I was unaccustomed to it, that's all.

Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and I'm sure I'll have more to tell you about my adventures with hard drive replacement. That's what I get for going for the largest, fastest, hottest drive I could find, I guess, huh? 'Till then, keep your ears open so you'll hear what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - PS3 Production Not Started Yet!

***** Madden NFL 07 On Sale!
Activision Goes Classic!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

Sony President Admits PlayStation 3 Production Not Even Started Yet

It's less than three months before Sony is scheduled to release its PlayStation 3, but Sony's president and CEO admits the company hasn't even started making the consoles yet.

Kaz Hirai, the man in charge of Sony Computer Entertainment America, admitted to gaming publication GameSpot that the PlayStation 3 production lines have yet to be turned on.

"We haven't started manufacturing yet," he said. "Some of our ops guys were actually just in China, and also in Japan just reviewing the lines and everything else. But they are, again, preparing as we speak to get the manufacturing going," Hirai stated.

In November, Sony says it will launch its next-gen video game console, the PS3, in three continents. Rumours of hold-ups have long circulated, with fears of production being costly and complicated, and anticipated problems with the built-in Blu-ray disc drive.

"We've not announced and we haven't set really a specific date to say, 'As of this day we're going to start manufacturing'," Hirai told GameSpot. Because of short timescale for mass production, Hirai says retail shortages of the PlayStation 3 are inevitable (one not need look very far back to remember Microsoft's Xbox 360 shortage last November).

"Even if you do the simple math you're talking about less than 700,000 units per territory, per major territory, between launch and the end of the year," he said. "So even if there was some fluctuation - you give Japan more, you give the US more, what have you - you're going to end up with some shortages. I think it's going to be very much of a challenge to be able to meet every single unit demand that's out there in the market. That's just a logistical impossibility."

Despite the tight timeline between now and November, Hirai says he is confident the company will still have its two million promised units for launch date. He says the company will also be able to ship one million consoles per month after that to reach six million units by March 2007. "Everything's pretty much on track," Hirai told GameSpot. "We're internally really getting geared up to go to market with this beautiful console in three months' time, and at this point in time all signs are good to go."

Of course everything is on track. Does anyone really expect Sony's president to admit he can't sleep at night because all he can think of are

the giant pain-in-the-ass problems that don't seem to be going away? No way - it would fuel the fire for Xbox 360 and the upcoming Wii console from Nintendo.

Plus, market analyst firm Yankee Group recently released "a study" that predicted the PS3 will still be victorious over Xbox 360 and Wii. Despite the fact that nobody has even seen the PS3 yet, Yankee Group seems to be quite sure it will be market leader by 2011, with 30 million units (or 44 per cent of the market) sold worldwide. Microsoft will come in second with 40 per cent market share (the company has already sold a reported five million units) while Nintendo will capture only 16 per cent.

But Sony shouldn't get cocky just because one firm thinks it can see into the future. More importantly than the PS3, we should be trying to get our hands on Yankee Group's crystal ball.

Electronic Arts Begins Selling "Madden NFL 07"

Electronic Arts Inc. on Tuesday began selling "Madden NFL 07," the newest title in its best-selling sports series, which year in and year out has delivered top-performing games.

"Madden" is the largest U.S. sports video game franchise with North America unit sales since 1989 topping 51 million, EA said.

Wedbush Morgan Securities analyst Michael Pachter predicted the new game's first-week sales performance could rival that of last year's title, which logged a record-setting 1.7 million copies sold.

"It could do 1 million in five days," Pachter said, referring to "Madden NFL 07" unit sales.

Pachter, who estimates that the new game could account for about 7 percent of EA's estimated annual revenue of around \$3 billion, said all video game companies will be interested in how the game fares.

"Madden is a good proxy for the health of the industry," he said.

While teams and players change each year, the game's perennial star is former Oakland Raiders head coach turned broadcaster John Madden, who earlier this month was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

This year's "Madden" installment faces a daunting legacy.

Last year's game was the top-selling title in North America, and has sold 6.5 million copies thus far, according to EA.

NPD research analyst Anita Frazier said that game was the best-selling "Madden" title to date, with revenues of about \$278 million.

That amount was just short of the U.S. box office revenue from the last "Harry Potter" movie and came even as fans criticized the version of the game designed for Microsoft Corp.'s next-generation Xbox 360.

Game reviewers and analysts said EA's challenge is to prove that the creators of "Madden" are still turning out innovative games despite the lack of competition. EA is in the second year of a exclusive video game

license deal with the National Football League.

"This is another 'prove it' year," said Bryan Intihar, previews editor at Electronic Gaming Monthly magazine.

Among other things, this year's offering has more advanced animation and emphasizes the running game with new features that allow players to control the lead blocker and create an open path for the running back, EA, which is based in Redwood City, Calif., said.

While the new title is more refined, with players that look and move more realistically, Intihar said it lacks the innovation that has made earlier versions of the game stand out.

"It's a good game ... It's not leaps and bounds better," he said.

The residents of Madden, Mississippi - population 74 - hosted the game's official "Maddenoliday" launch party on Tuesday and were among the first to try the new game on Microsoft's next-generation consoles. Attendees included NFL greats Jerry Rice, Warren Moon and Marshall Faulk along with some 3,000 children and parents from surrounding towns.

"They were just loving it," Faulk said of people who played the game on game kiosks set up around town.

"Madden NFL 07" carries an "E," for everyone, rating and sells for between \$59.99 to \$29.99, depending on device.

Activision Goes Classic On PSP

The days of a single joystick with a lone button may be long gone, but Activision is banking that the appeal of games that use simple controls isn't. The publisher today announced Activision Hits Remixed for the PlayStation Portable, a collection of the company's games from the days of the Atari 2600.

The compilation, due for release this fall, will include more than 40 Activision offerings from the classic console - games such as the vine-swinging, alligator-stomping, scorpion-jumping Pitfall! Also confirmed for the package will be Kaboom!, Chopper Command, Stampede, and Keystone Kapers.

Games that have a multiplayer mode will be playable by either taking turns on one PSP, playing games over the handheld's wireless capabilities, or competing in two-player matches over two PSPs with just one UMD disc using the game-sharing feature.

It's unclear how or if the games will be "Remixed," but Activision does say the collection will sport "modernized front-end graphics." Gamers can also look forward to a 1980s-themed soundtrack, classic game manuals, and several unlockables.

A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

AOL Chief Technology Officer Resigns

AOL chief technology officer Maureen Govern, who oversaw the division responsible for accidentally releasing search data for more than a half a millions Internet users, has resigned from the company, according to an internal company memorandum.

John McKinley, AOL's former CTO, will take over on an interim basis, according to the memo obtained by Reuters on Monday. Govern joined the company last September.

AOL declined comment.

AOL apologized on August 7 for releasing information onto the Web about 20 million keyword searches from about 658,000 anonymous users over a three-month period. Disclosing the data was against company policy, AOL said at the time.

The release of data by the online division of media conglomerate Time Warner Inc. drew the ire of privacy advocates, who called for the U.S. Federal Trade Commission to review the company's customer data retention practices.

Collecting and sharing Internet user data for any purpose is under close scrutiny by privacy watchdogs. Internet search leader Google Inc. won plaudits for refusing to comply with U.S. government demands to hand over search data.

A researcher in AOL's technology research department and the employee's supervisor have also left the company in the wake of the disclosure, a source familiar with the matter said on Monday.

In response to a torrent of criticism across the Internet, AOL also said it plans to create a task force to review its customer information privacy policy.

"We have to earn their trust each and every day and with each and every action we take," AOL Chief Executive Jonathan Miller wrote in a separate memo obtained by Reuters.

The task force, headed by AOL Vice Chairman Ted Leonsis and AOL General Counsel Randy Boe, plans to review the company's data collection and retention policies, according to the memo.

AOL currently stores search data that can identify users for 30 days. Anonymous search data, the kind divulged by AOL in early August, is stored indefinitely, the source said.

Privacy advocates such as the Electronic Frontier Foundation filed a complaint with the FTC last week requesting an investigation into AOL's privacy practices, arguing that the Internet provider did not need to store such search data.

AOL's task force will also review other measures to protect users, including ways to prevent the storage of any sensitive data in the research database that include 16 digits, like those of many credit cards, the source said.

Apple To Recall 1.8 Million Notebook Batteries

Apple Computer Inc. will recall 1.8 million lithium-ion notebook computer batteries after nine devices overheated, causing minor burns to two users, U.S. safety regulators said on Thursday.

The recall is the second-biggest in U.S. history involving electronics or computers. Just last week, No. 1 PC maker Dell Inc. recalled 4.1 million lithium-ion batteries.

In both cases, the batteries had power cells made by Sony Corp.. Apple, like Dell, said it did not expect any "material" financial impact on its business.

Sony said in a separate statement that it did not anticipate further recalls of batteries using the potentially faulty cells. The Japanese electronics company said the Apple and Dell recalls would cost Sony between 20 billion yen and 30 billion yen - or \$172 million to \$258 million.

Cupertino, California-based Apple will recall 1.1 million batteries sold with notebook computers in the United States and 700,000 abroad, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission said.

"Our No. 1 priority is to recall and replace the affected batteries free of charge," Apple spokesman Steve Dowling said. The reported overheating incidents were due to "contamination" in the Sony battery cells, he added.

The batteries were sold with Apple iBook G4 and PowerBook G4 computers from October 2003 through this month, according to the safety commission. None of Apple's most recent notebooks using microprocessors from Intel Corp. are affected, Dowling said.

Apple had said last week after the Dell recall that it was reviewing its notebook batteries to ensure they met its standards.

"The key message to consumers is these lithium-ion batteries can actually overheat and pose a fire hazard," said Scott Wolfson, spokesman for the Consumer Product Safety Commission in Washington.

"Sony clearly has a problem here," said Tim Bjarin, principal analyst at Creative Strategies in San Jose, California. "There's a problem with the batteries overheating."

Bjarin noted, however, that in Apple's case there were no reported notebook fires, while several of the recalled Dell computers had erupted in flames. Dell said it had reports of six batteries overheating, but no injuries were reported.

The recall follows a smaller Apple recall of lithium-ion batteries in certain iBook G4 and PowerBook G4 notebooks sold worldwide from October 2004, through May 2005. Those batteries were made by LG Chem Ltd. of South

Korea, according to Apple's Web site.

Dell of Round Rock, Texas, last week began a voluntary recall of 2.7 million batteries sold in the United States and 1.4 million sold overseas. The Dell-branded batteries were in computers sold from April, 2004, through July 18 of this year.

Microsoft's IE7 Nears Final Version

Microsoft released the latest test version of its Web browser, Release Candidate 1 (RC1), as it prepares to officially launch Internet Explorer 7 later this year. IE7 is the first major update for the browser in five years. Microsoft has said that improving security was a top priority, and the software giant hopes to quell IE6 critics who have cited a plethora of security flaws in that browser.

Advanced security features in IE7 include ActiveX Opt-in, a "phishing" filter, and a Fix My Settings application, both of which should help protect against malicious software and fraudulent Web sites.

Explorer 7 Release Candidate 1, made available on Thursday, should be the final test iteration and Microsoft is confident that Web sites and applications designed for RC1 will be compatible with the final version.

No major changes have been made since the release of IE7 beta 3, although the new browser has been tweaked to improve the French and Spanish language support, and includes a feature that removes prior betas and makes it easier to install the new version.

RC1 is available for Windows XP SP2, Windows XP Professional x64 Edition, and Windows Server 2003 systems.

Microsoft appears to be on schedule to launch IE7 in tandem with the upcoming Vista operating system, Jupiter Research analyst Joe Wilcox said. "This is the near-final version, and if no major bugs are discovered, which is always a possibility, this is the last test."

Delivering a better browser is critical move for Microsoft, Wilcox said, noting that the company has lost ground to competitors like Firefox and Netscape.

The new security features are important, Wilcox said. But, he added, there is still work to do in making the browser compatible with Web standards and removing some obstacles that force page designers to tweak their sites so they are compatible with Explorer.

"Support for cascading style sheets is still not what it should be, and that could be a problem because Web developers use CSS to make their pages more flexible," he said. Still, the analyst believes that IE7 will live up to the hype and will be a critical component of the Vista OS.

Logitech's New Mice Offer Speedier Searches

Logitech announced new mice that it claims will ease Web searches and

navigation of content on a PC.

The wireless MX Revolution and VX Revolution laser mice include an automatic Web search button, and a wheel that can navigate down hundreds of pages in seven seconds, according to the company.

After flicking the MicroGear Precision Scroll Wheel, the wheel spins continuously for seven seconds, scrolling down hundreds of pages in a Web page, spreadsheet, or word processing document, said Kate Brinks, a Logitech spokeswoman.

The free-spinning wheel makes it easier for users to navigate through long documents or data lists. "Even in a three-page document, [the mouse] reduces the repetitive motion of scrolling down. I use it a lot in my e-mail inbox," Brinks said. The wheel can switch between the free-spin and the conventional scroll mode.

Located under the scroll wheel is the One-Touch Search button, which brings up Web search results for a highlighted word or phrase with just a single click. After highlighting a term in a spreadsheet or document, clicking the search button opens a Web browser with Yahoo, Google, or Yahoo LiveWords search results for the term. Logitech's SetPoint software needs to be installed for this button to work, Brinks said. Users can highlight terms for Web search in any software.

The \$100 MX Revolution, targeted at desktop users, also has a thumb wheel that collaborates with the MicroGear Precision Scroll Wheel to zoom into pictures, Logitech said. It also has seven customizable buttons to run program macros.

The smaller \$80 Logitech VX Revolution is targeted at laptop users and operates on a single AA battery.

Both come with a USB micro-receiver that wirelessly connects the mice to a PC up to 30 feet away.

The mice work on Windows XP, Windows Vista, and Mac OS X PCs. They will become available on Friday, according to the company.

Bolivia Debuts Microsoft In Incan Tongue

Just click "Qallariy" to begin. Pronounced "KAH-lyah-ree," the word replaces "Start" on Microsoft Windows' familiar taskbar in the program's Quechua translation, which debuts in Bolivia on Friday.

President Evo Morales, the South American nation's first Indian leader, has found an ally in the world's largest software company as he promotes the native tongues of his country's indigenous majority.

Some 2.6 million Bolivians - nearly one third of the country - speak the Incan language, and Morales sees empowering these people as his primary mission. Among the first users of the Quechua software will be Indian members of a constituent assembly meeting in this colonial city to rewrite the nation's constitution.

First launched in Peru in June and now freely available for download online, the software is a simple patch that translates the familiar Windows

and Office menus and commands into Quechua. For now, it works only with the Spanish version of Windows XP and Office 2003, but it and other languages will be built-in to Microsoft's next operating system, Vista.

Microsoft Corp. teamed up with several universities in Peru's Quechua-speaking south to create the translation program, joining 47 other versions of Windows in such languages as Kazakh, Maori and Zulu.

"More than anything, I was surprised," said 21-year-old Dilma Arancibia, a Quechua speaker invited to a Thursday preview of the program. "If they hadn't done this with Quechua, and if we don't teach it to our children, the language would definitely cease to exist."

And while few of the estimated 10 to 13 million Quechua speakers in South America have regular access to a computer, the project is already paying dividends for Microsoft: The company recently won a contract from the Peruvian government for 5,000 Quechua-equipped computers.

Linguistics professors spent nearly three years reconciling 22 dialects of the language - many without a formal written form - to compile a vocabulary fit for Microsoft's programs.

For "file," they chose "kipu" (KEE-poo), borrowing the name of an ancient Incan practice of recording information in an intricate system of knotted strings. "Internet" became "Llika" (LEE-ka), the Quechua word for spider web.

The Quechua translation also includes many English words, as well as a few in Spanish.

The greatest challenge was likely finding a balance between the use of foreign words and the creation of new terms, said Serafin Coronel-Molina, a linguist at Princeton University and native Quechua speaker.

Borrowed words "are one way that a language evolves," he said. "But you can't just fill up a language with borrowed words, because then what have you got?"

It seems the computers are also still trying to figure out Quechua.

Sandra Picha was one of a dozen Quechua speakers invited to type out a letter to Morales at Thursday's preview. As she filled the screen with Quechua words, Microsoft's automatic spell-checker underlined every single one in red.

"It says I've written it all wrong," she laughed.

British Police Arrest Two Over Web Scams

British police arrested a man and woman in London on Saturday as part of a wide-ranging investigation into holiday Web site fraud that has left nearly 3,000 people out of pocket.

The woman in her thirties, and the man in his 60s, were detained at separate addresses in London and are being questioned by fraud squad officers, the Metropolitan Police said.

The fake Web sites; sunmedresorts.com, unbeatableholidays.com, holidaydaysforunder200pounds.com, holidayrez.com and holidayez.com were all used in the con.

The fraud worked by enticing people to buy non-existent holidays and then disappearing with the cash.

The Association of British Travel Agents has warned people to be careful about buying trips online. The organization advises people to check its own Web site or that of other affiliated organisations like Air Travel Organisers' Licensing to make sure any holiday firm is bona fide.

The Metropolitan Police, the Fraud Squad and the Office of Fair Trading are all investigating the scam which is thought to have netted hundreds of thousands of pounds.

British Youth Sentenced for Mass Email Attack On Former Employers

A British teenager has been given a two-month curfew and made subject to electronic tagging after admitting a mass email attack against a major insurance company which had earlier sacked him.

David Lennon admitted sending around five million emails over a five-day period in 2004, leading to the collapse of the Domestic and General Group's mail server, which processed company emails in Britain, France, Germany and Spain.

A youth court in Wimbledon, southwest London, was told the disruption had cost the company around 30,000 pounds (44,000 euros, 57,000 dollars).

The emails purported to come from employees and the head of Microsoft, Bill Gates. They also contained a quote from supernatural film "The Ring".

The teenager, from Bedworth, west central England, pleaded guilty to a charge under Britain's Computer Misuse Act of "causing an unauthorised modification to a computer".

Lennon was 16 at the time of the offence and a former part-time employee of the insurance firm. He had been dismissed from the company in 2003.

The Metropolitan Police's Computer Crime Unit said it was the first time a successful prosecution had been brought for this type of offence.

Domestic and General's main business is providing warranty protection on domestic appliances, electrical equipment and gas central heating systems.

Man Gets 6 Years In Software Piracy Case

A Florida man who made millions of dollars selling illegal copies of computer programs was sentenced Friday to six years in prison in one of the nation's largest software piracy cases.

Danny Ferrer, of Lakeland, Fla., pleaded guilty in June to conspiracy and copyright infringement charges after an FBI investigation of his Web site,

BuysUSA.com. Ferrer also was ordered to pay more than \$4.1 million in restitution to software makers Adobe Systems Inc., Autodesk, and Macromedia Inc.

Ferrer bought numerous airplanes, a fighter-jet simulator, a Lamborghini, a Hummer and other luxury vehicles with his profits. U.S. District Court Judge T.S. Ellis III ordered the items be sold to pay restitution in the case.

"You extended your hand into the pockets of these people," Ellis said before sentencing Ferrer. "If severe penalties were not attached, people would line up from here to Los Angeles to do what you've done."

Ferrer told the judge he started selling the pirated software to pay for a feeding tube for his sick wife, but "there was probably a certain amount of greed."

Prosecutors said they are working with the FBI to investigate the providers of fake software serial numbers on the Internet, which allowed Ferrer to sell the programs.

The software looked legitimate to consumers, but was deeply discounted, said John Wolfe, of Business Software Alliance, an industry group.

Ferrer's Web site began selling software in 2002 and was shut down by the FBI in October 2005, authorities said.

Prosecutors said the illegal sales cost the software companies as much as \$20 million, but industry officials say the amount could be higher.

"This is the ultimate case," prosecutor Jay V. Prabhu said in court. "This is a case where someone made a lot of money."

Verizon Replaces Cancelled DSL Fees With Its Own

Verizon Communications has decided to pocket most of the savings from the cancellation of a government surcharge on digital subscriber lines, despite calls from consumer groups to pass on the savings on to users.

Verizon, one of the biggest U.S. telecoms companies, used to charge DSL customers a monthly fee of \$1.25 or \$2.83, depending on connection speeds, for a government fund to help bring service to lower-income and rural areas.

The government stopped charging that fee from August 14, but Verizon will instead impose a new monthly surcharge of \$1.20 or \$2.70, beginning August 26, which it said was to help subsidize connection costs.

"There's a lot of cost associated with the service and this is a way we've elected to recover a portion of that cost," said Verizon spokeswoman Bobbi Henson on Tuesday.

By introducing the new surcharge as the previous fee ended, Verizon hoped to minimize the impact on customers, she said.

But consumer groups like the Consumer Federation of America said DSL customers should not have to pay a new fee.

"They charge so much for that already. The simple fact is they have market power," said Mark Cooper, an official at the Consumer Federation of America.

Verizon's latest earnings report in August showed it had a total 6.1 million broadband customers, although 375,000 were connected to its more advanced fiber-optic network called FiOS.

BellSouth Drops Fee For High-Speed Internet

BellSouth Corp., the No. 3 U.S. local telephone company, on Friday said it will immediately drop a \$2.97 monthly fee for its high-speed Internet service after U.S. communications regulators threatened to question the charge.

Most customers would see the change on their bills within a week, but it could take up to six weeks to implement, the company said. It added that customers charged the fee dating back to August 16 would receive a credit.

The Federal Communications Commission was poised to send a letter questioning the fee that replaced a surcharge for a government program that ended this month, a source familiar with the matter said earlier on Friday.

US Sues Maine Officials for Probe on Verizon, NSA

The U.S. government sued Maine officials on Tuesday to block their demand that Verizon disclose whether it gave the government's spying program access to its customer data, documents showed.

The government's civil suit, submitted by the U.S. Department of Justice to a district court in Maine, said the Maine public utilities officials' attempts to obtain information on Verizon's involvement with the National Security Agency (NSA) were "invalid."

"The defendant state officers' attempts to obtain such information are invalid under the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution and are preempted by the United States Constitution and various federal statutes," the lawsuit said.

Kurt Adams, chairman of the Maine Public Utilities Commission, as well as two other regulatory officials, were named in the lawsuit.

Verizon's local subsidiaries were also named to prevent the company from responding to the Maine officials' demands for information.

"We're just in the middle here," said Verizon spokesman Peter Thonis.

The federal government has also sued the New Jersey Attorney General and Missouri utility regulators for serving similar subpoenas for information to ATT 2006 Reuters Limited. All rights reserved. Republication or redistribution of Reuters content is expressly prohibited without the prior written consent of Reuters. Reuters shall not be liable for any errors or delays in the content, or for any actions taken in reliance thereon.

Unable To Unplug, Tech Addicts May Sue

Keeping employees on electronic leashes such as laptops, BlackBerries and other devices that keep them constantly connected to the office could soon lead to lawsuits by those who grow addicted to the technology, a U.S. academic warns.

In a follow-up to an earlier paper on employees' tech addictions, Gayle Porter, associate professor of management at the Rutgers University School of Business in Camden, New Jersey, has written a paper that states workers whose personal lives suffer as a result of tech addictions could turn their sights on their employers.

"These people that can't keep it within any reasonable parameters and have these problems in their lives, at some point may say: 'My life is not all that great. How did this happen? Who can I blame for this?'," Porter, who co-authored the study with two other academics, said in an interview on Thursday. "And they're going to say, 'The company'."

The paper, which is still under review and expected to be published in an academic journal in the near future, highlights the potential for fallout resulting from technologies initially aimed at boosting a company's productivity.

But instead of increased efficiency, lawsuits against employers who supply workers with gadgets are "very possible," she says.

Research In Motion Ltd.'s BlackBerry wireless device - jokingly dubbed the "CrackBerry" by some - is well known for what some describe as its addictive properties.

In most major North American and European cities, businesspeople can be seen gazing nose-down into their BlackBerry screens, tapping out terse e-mails.

Porter says she isn't picking on RIM or the BlackBerry in particular, but notes that terms like "CrackBerry" show that "there is, however lightheartedly, some acknowledgment that many people have kind of gotten out of control with using these devices."

Others complain of simply being unable to unplug at home, with laptops, e-mails or conference calls keeping them working into the wee hours.

Addiction to technology - blamed by critics on the seeming ubiquity of portable e-mail devices, smartphones, cellphones and laptops, coupled with long working hours - is hardly a new phenomenon.

But Porter argues litigation could be the next step, as employees seek redress for technology dependence. She predicts companies could use a free-will argument in defending themselves: "They're going to, I would suspect, say that this was an individual choice."

Mainland China has opened its first halfway house for Internet addicts, offering shell-shocked teenagers counselling, books - and the use of computers.

The shelter can hold four minors for one-night stays and help bridge gaps between children and parents, the Shanghai Daily said.

"None of the teenagers are forced to come here," the newspaper quoted Wang Hui, the house's chief social worker, as saying.

"We wander around in nearby Internet bars at night and bring them to the halfway house if the teen agrees."

Computer and online gaming has exploded in China in recent years, with an estimated 14 million people taking part.

Amid growing concern that more and more young people are getting hooked, China has issued a raft of regulations aimed at curbing excessive game playing at Internet cafes and heavily fining owners that admit minors.

The Shanghai shelter, modeled on one already in operation Hong Kong, took in the first three boys on Monday, the paper said, including Chen Jiafeng - a 17-year-old "fed up with the depressive atmosphere" of his family.

Chen went home after talking with a psychologist for four hours and after social workers visited his family to discuss proper parent-child communications, the paper said.

In May, the parents of a 13-year-old boy who killed himself after playing a computer game for 36 hours sued the game's Chinese distributor.

Campaign Targets Web Crimes Against Kids

Attorney General Alberto Gonzales announced a new public service campaign Monday that will warn teenage girls against posting information on the Internet that could put them at risk of attack by child predators.

"Every day, these predators are looking for someone to hurt," Gonzales said at the 18th annual Crimes Against Children Conference in Dallas. "Every day, we must educate parents and children about the threat."

About 2,700 law enforcement officials from around the world are attending the conference, which runs through Thursday.

"We want the front line professionals to be able to go back to their communities to protect the children in their communities," Gonzales said. "This conference brings folks together from all parts of the world and gets them talking with each other."

A third of this year's 180 workshops are focusing on Internet crime, said Lynn Davis, president and CEO of the Dallas Children's Advocacy Center, which is hosting the conference with the Dallas Police Department.

The ad campaign by the Department of Justice, in partnership with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and the Ad Council, will begin running early next year.

"It's all part of the ongoing effort to educate the public about this very serious threat," Gonzales said.

According to a Justice Department study, one in seven children using the Internet has been sexually solicited and one in three has been exposed to unwanted sexual material. One in 11 has been harassed.

One that warned about the dangers online was developed in 2004, giving advice to parents on how to protect their children from Internet predators. A second series of ads released in 2005 warned teen girls about forming online relationships with people they don't know.

Dallas Children's Advocacy Center: <http://www.dcac.org/>

Nat'l Center for Missing & Exploited Children :
<http://www.missingkids.com/>

CNN.com To Replay 9/11 Attacks Coverage

CNN will mark the fifth anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks by replaying on the Internet the cable network's coverage of that day's events.

Viewers can watch how events unfolded starting at 8:30 a.m., minutes before the first reports of an airplane hitting the World Trade Center. The feed will run in real time, as the network showed it five years ago, until midnight.

For the day, CNN will make its online video service, CNN Pipeline, available for free. Normally, viewers pay \$2.95 a month or \$24.95 a year for four separate video feeds.

Online viewers will be able to watch live reports of memorial services through one of the feeds. So that viewers won't accidentally stumble upon graphic footage from 2001, the replay feed will be covered with a notice instructing users to click only if they want to watch.

"Our users may choose to view the stream of coverage from Sept. 11, 2001, or live coverage of memorial services at Ground Zero, or they may click through the numerous interactive elements on the site," said David Payne, senior vice president and general manager of CNN.com. "They have the power to determine the best way for them to remember the anniversary."

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